

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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Chairman

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MINUTES

6-7 December 1973

Library of Congress
Wilson Room
Washington, D.C.

Members Present: Aines, Becker, Casey, Cuadra, Dunlap, Goland, Lerner, Lorenz (for Mumford), Moore, Scott, Velde, Wu and Burkhardt (Chairman).

Staff Present : Cranwell, Reszetar, Stevens, Swartz and Ulrich

Guests Present : Robert Harte, Federation Internationale Documentation
Frederick Kilgour, Ohio College Library Center
Herman Liebaers, International Federation of Library
Associations
Virginia Mathews, NCLIS Consultant

Dr. Burkhardt, presiding, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. The minutes were approved. Dr. Burkhardt reviewed his recent discussions with C. William Fischer, OMB, relative to the NCLIS requests for \$750,000 and 11 staff. It is probable that OMB will permit the Commission to ask Congress for \$500,000 and some increase in personnel.

National Program Document

Mr. Becker led the discussion of the National Program Document. Mr. Becker recapitulated the recent activities of his committee and then covered its future plans. A summary follows:

In New York City last June the Commission voted to make the National Program its number one priority for the coming year. Rod Swartz was assigned full time to the project. The decision was made to circulate the revised full-length technical paper to a select group of professionals for comment: McCarthy, ARL; Weber, ARL; Cole, CLR; Cummings, NLM; Burchinal, NSF; Hays, OE; Wedgeworth, ALA; Cooke, ALA; Mohrhardt, CLR; Smith, ASIS; Day, NLM; Eberhardt, Wisconsin.

In July the Committee on the Library of Congress and the Committee on Policy were combined and the new Committee met on August 9 to discuss the feedback it had received on the technical paper. It also reviewed the wording of an abbreviated draft proposal and decided on a future course of action:

- (1) To further revise the draft proposal so that it could be ready for public distribution before the Boston meeting in October.
- (2) To move forward with the circulation of a cover letter and copies of the draft proposal to professionals, associations, etc., for their comment and reaction, and to circulate the technical paper to additional selected individuals.
- (3) To prepare the outline of a talk, describing the program, which members could give at various regional and state library association meetings during September through November.
- (4) To establish a mechanism for receiving comments on the draft proposal and reworking them into the technical paper.
- (5) To submit the draft proposal to the professional press for wide public dissemination.
- (6) To approach CLR, NSF and NEH on the possibility of cooperative funding for support of a contractual effort to organize the continuing development of the national program.

Steps 1-5 have been taken. Step 6 led to CLR's decision to move ahead independently on funding a feasibility study for a National Bibliographical Service; NSF expressed readiness to cosponsor the implied systems study; and NEH deferred a decision pending clarification of its role in the National Program.

Numerous meetings were held during October and November to discuss the draft proposal with professional groups. Commissioners delivered talks on the National Program to library conferences in Ohio, Kentucky, California, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Oregon (Pacific Northwest), Mississippi, Alaska, South Carolina, Illinois, New Jersey (Middle Atlantic), New Hampshire (Northeast), Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, and Nebraska and to information scientists attending the annual ASIS convention in Los Angeles. Additional professional groups contacted included:

- ALA Executive Staff, Executive Secretaries, Committees
- American Society for Information Science
- Association of Research Libraries
- Information Exchange (California)
- IIA (Information Industry Association)
- Law Library Association
- Medical Library Association
- Special Libraries Association
- Washington State Library Advisory Committee

Comments on the draft proposal have begun to arrive and we can expect to receive many more as the library press further exposes the document.

There appears to be general agreement that a national program is needed and that the National Commission is the responsible body to push it. No competitive concept has surfaced to suggest a fundamental change in our overall direction. There is some feeling in the library press that we may be imposing a technical superstructure that will promote impersonalization of library and information service. Responses reflect a natural concern for the effect our program will have on various special interest groups.

The next revision of the draft proposal, it appears, should contain more about:

- (a) The human element. How the proposed program will benefit the average citizen and how he will relate to the network.
- (b) Copyright. How a decision on copyright will affect our program's thrust toward intersystem cooperation.
- (c) Finance. Who will pay for what in the national program.
- (d) Technical. The affect the national program will have on existing networks of one kind or another.
- (e) Federalism. How to balance local autonomy with a national program to avoid the stigma of Federal control.
- (f) Private sector. The role of the private sector--publishers, information industry, professional societies--in the national program.
- (g) Definitions. Of: network, information, regional, interstate, multistate, MARC, FTS, etc.
- (h) Cost.
- (i) Nonusers.
- (j) International implications.

From personal conversations with groups and individuals, we have seen a need to gather more information on certain topics that represent weaknesses in our program. For example:

- (a) Preparing a comparative analysis of the pros and cons of assigning responsibility for the national program to different organizational entities.
- (b) Elaborating the role of computers in the network.
- (c) Developing estimates of the cost of the program and the value of potential benefits.
- (d) Analyzing the role of information in the U.S. economy to provide the rationale (before Congress) for a new Federal investment.
- (e) Providing a first draft set of technical specifications for what the proposed national library and information network and its supporting services would cost. Such a system analysis would be valuable to prove to skeptics that there is at least one specific way to implement the proposed network and that the costs have been carefully analyzed. It would also serve to stimulate more fruitful discussion within the library and information communities concerning how they would use such a network. (This seems like a natural for NSF support.)
- (f) Describing the extramural program, i.e., manpower, marketing studies, research and development, etc., in much greater detail.
- (g) Examining the relationship between the average citizen and the proposed network in order to clarify the ultimate value of the network to people. What would be the impact of a national knowledge network on our society? What are the human factors involved at point of use? Will a knowledge network inhibit or expand intellectual freedom? Should a national knowledge network also include museums and other cultural institutions? Such a study would also be valuable were it to prove that the costs of the national program would be repaid many times over through cultural development, personal enrichment, improved educational level, and social development of our people. (NEH might find this type of social environmental impact study to be worthy of support because it will clarify the human factors in the national program which at present are poorly understood analytically by us and by them.)
- (h) Evaluating the proposed national program in the light of international network developments.
- (i) Developing the role of the private sector vs. the public sector in the implementation of a national program.

- (j) Estimating the type and volume of telecommunications traffic required by a national library and information network and comparing the relative capabilities, capacities and services leased by the Federal Telecommunications System with those of the line rate commercial carriers.

Presentation of the program document activity report was interlaced with Commission discussion of a number of related concerns. Colonel Aines urged attention to high aspirations and a focus on national needs. Daniel Casey suggested that NCLIS seek more reaction from library trustees. Carlos Cuadra reiterated the requirement for system staff support. It was agreed that the program document will be revised by late spring and that the effort of the Commission be centered on this activity.

Guests Presentations

The Commission heard presentations by four invited visitors. Miss Virginia Mathews suggested some possible courses of action for the Commission to take toward greater visibility, ties with a variety of information disseminators, and a greater understanding of user's needs. Mr. Frederick Kilgour spoke of the current status and future plans of the Ohio College Library Center. He explained the legal and financial picture of the Center and talked of the needs for coordinated development based on the regional systems now emerging. Mr. Herman Liebaers and Mr. Robert Harte gave the Commission an overview of two prominent international information groups, I.F.L.A. (the International Federation of Library Associations) and F.I.D. (the Federation International Documentation). Mr. Harte spoke of the relationships between F.I.D. and other associations. Mr. Liebaers concentrated on the task group activities of I.F.L.A. and on the plans for the first U.S. meeting of I.F.L.A. to be held in Washington, D.C., in November 1974. The members agreed to discuss each future presentation as it applies to the NCLIS program. The agenda will be arranged to provide the time to do this.

Staff and Members' Presentations

There were a number of information reports by the members and staff:

Stevens reported that the Annual Report is complete and in the hands of Mr. Lerner for typesetting.

Stevens and Burkhardt reported on the House testimony of the NCLIS regarding the White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services. OMB requested an opportunity to review and "clear" the statement by Dr. Burkhardt. OMB asked Dr. Burkhardt to add a sentence disclaiming the NCLIS testimony as Administration policy. Mr. Brademas at the hearing

read into the record a statement from the history of the NCLIS legislation regarding the independence of the Commission. OMB, relying on their Circular A-19 still claims that NCLIS must inform OMB of all Congressional testimony and include a disclaimer if NCLIS cannot agree with Administration policy.

Mrs. Reszetar presented a flow chart for administration and organizational activity necessary to prepare for the White House Conference. It is clear that action is needed now if the 1976 date is agreed upon and the President calls the conference.

Mr. Cuadra reported that the Denver Conference on User's Needs is still in preparation. It has not yet gone to the printer.

Mr. Cuadra reported also on his attendance at a Federally-sponsored conference on citizen's information centers. It was agreed that NCLIS would maintain contact with Mr. Andrew Boots II in HUD where the focus of this interest now lies.

Progress reports were made on the three contracts not yet completed. The Westat Corporation has been reminded that its job is to provide recommendations, not a survey or a tabulation of data. They seem to understand. Government Studies and Systems is proceeding with its study and the concentration is on recommendations for public library funding. The Catholic University recommendations on continuing education are being drafted and will be ready for review shortly.

Future meeting dates were discussed. A suggested calendar will be prepared by staff for the February meeting.

Mrs. Wu asked for increased attention by the Commission to the problems of school libraries, media centers and to school libraries, media centers and to school librarians.

Stevens and Lorenz reported on the New York State Proposal to use an experimental communications satellite for library information transfer in 1975-76. The proposal competes with one from the mountain states. Neither is well-refined at this time.

Mr. Lerner reported on current publicity for NCLIS in journals, newspapers and on radio.

The Commission adopted resolutions of appreciation and ordered that copies be sent to Messrs. Kemeny and Zipf.

An invitation to visit the Folger Library has been received and will be accepted in February 1974.

The Superintendent of Documents and the Public Printer will be invited to the February meeting.